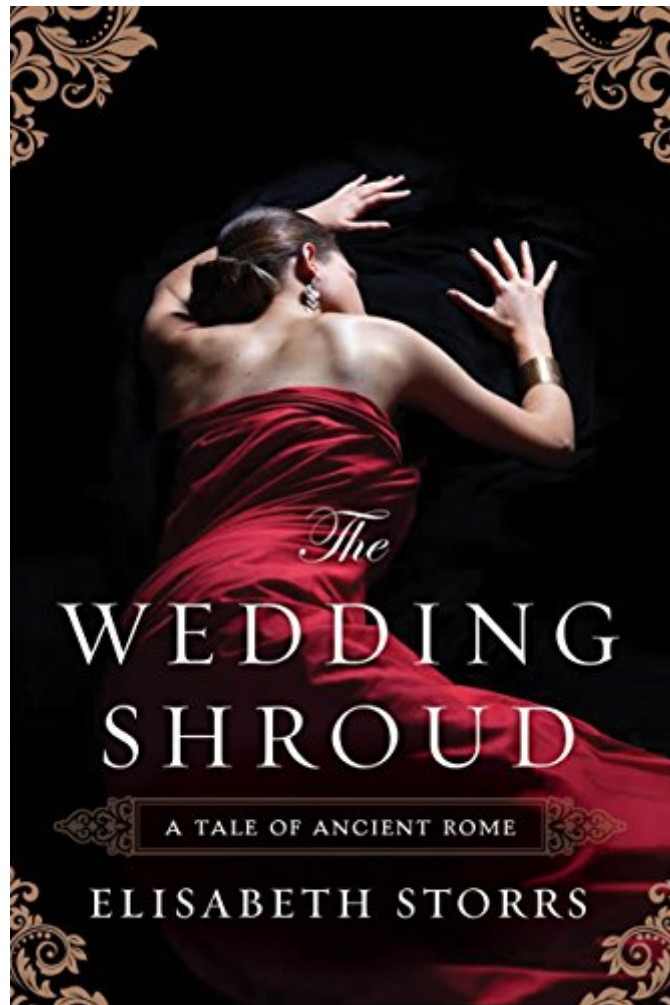




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The Wedding Shroud (A Tale Of Ancient Rome Book 1)



Synopsis

“All the drama and sensuality expected of a historical romance, plus a sensitivity to the realities of life in a very different time and world.”
• Ursula Le Guin
In 406 BC, to seal a tenuous truce, the young Roman Caecilia is wedded to Vel Mastarna, an Etruscan nobleman from Veii. Leaving her militaristic homeland, Caecilia is determined to remain true to Roman virtues while living among the sinful Etruscans. But, despite her best intentions, she is seduced by a culture that offers women education, independence, sexual freedom, and an empowering religion. Enchanted by Veii but terrified of losing ties to Rome, Caecilia performs rites to delay becoming a mother, thereby postponing true entanglement. Yet as she develops an unexpected love for Mastarna, she is torn between her birthplace and the city in which she now lives. As war looms, Caecilia discovers Fate is not so easy to control, and she must choose where her allegiance lies. *The Wedding Shroud* is the first book in the *Tales of Ancient Rome* saga. Subsequent books in the series include *The Golden Dice* and *Call to Juno*.

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Customer Reviews

I admit I was a little concerned a couple of chapters in. *The Wedding Shroud* has a slow start in my opinion, and it definitely took me a little time to get warmed up and truly involved in the story line. However, once I made it a little further, I was happy that I gave it a chance. I love the author's depiction of the main characters, Caecilia. She's portrayed as a strong female, yet she still follows much of what is expected of a female during this time period. The author does a great job at bringing to life a period of time which I know very little about. I'm a huge historical fiction fan, but ancient Rome is not one of my top picks when choosing a book to read. I love how the author stayed true to history, yet gave the reader a story, not a textbook. I would definitely recommend this novel to historical fiction fans.

I very much enjoyed this book, as well as the others in the series. The violence is present as it is a time of prolonged war, but it is more referred to, than graphic, and where there is a graphic description it is brief and with purpose; the sexuality is there, including conflicting feelings about it from differing cultures, but it is mostly done tastefully. There is reference to rape and the threat of rape, but again, women were, and are, considered the "spoils of war." In the second book, there is more detail because a character is a prostitute, but again, I believe it is handled as gently as possible. It would not be a story true to the times if these things were excluded. I never felt I was reading a story that was based on gaining readership via sex and gore, even when it was referred to, or part of the story. It was all secondary to the lives of those it describes.

Author Elisabeth Storrs explores the ancient world of the Etruscans in her lush novel *The Wedding Shroud*. Set in 407 B.C. a wealthy young Roman woman named Caecilia is married to an Etruscan magnate to seal a peace treaty between their two civilizations. Her husband is the powerful and wealthy Vel Mastarna. When she travels to his home in Veii where she is introduced to a culture vastly different and far more feral and decadent than the rigid, rule-oriented Rome she is forced to leave behind. Slowly, as time passes, Caecilia learns to love her new husband and life in Veii. She succumbs to temptation administered by her husband's brother and soon finds herself trapped by religion and opiates. There is much to laud about this book. First, there is a rich story-line full of twists and turns, personal growth, and intriguing details. Secondly, the characters are fascinating, beautifully compelling, and very believable. Like the skin of an onion, the depth of each character is slowly, tantalizingly revealed as the tale progresses. And then there are the glorious details of ancient Etruscan and Roman everyday life that not only educates, but entertains. From war to religion to fashion to food and drink, it is all laid out in fabulous detail - a testament to the vast

research completed by the author. This ancient time comes alive with its brutality and excesses. Lovely, easy to read prose makes this a truly engrossing read.

This story is a departure from what I usually read since I know next to nothing about Ancient Roman history. I enjoy historical fiction but this one was difficult for me to really get into at first. The biggest hurdle I found was knowing how to pronounce the names of the characters and gods in this ancient time. I found the book to be a bit slow but once I got past the first few chapters it became more interesting. This isn't a book with humor or even witty dialogue between characters. It's gritty, sexually liberal, a bit violent, and probably quite real considering the time. Take that into consideration if you decide to give this one a chance. There isn't anything too bad, but know the content is there. This also isn't a story that is light reading. I found myself re-reading parts to understand what was going on. Kind of an education as well as a good story. If you enjoy a true historical story, this might be to your liking. I found it interesting even though it was a little slow at times. However, this kept my interest and I found I really did want to find out what happens to the characters. Caution: there is a huge cliff hanger at the end. Frustrating? Yes - but it made me want to download the next book.

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